

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION
USSN: 09/915,027

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1-57 (Cancelled).

58. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a slaughtered bird carcass suspended by its legs ~~comprising breaking at least one tissue connection between the~~ wherein the carcass comprises a spine, a stomach, of the bird and skin comprising belly fat skin, and situated on the inside of the belly skin belly skin fat prior to evisceration of the ~~carcass of the bird, wherein the at least one tissue connection is broken at least partially by~~ and wherein the spine defines a longitudinal axis, the method comprising:

- a) introducing a separating means into the carcass of the bird through a hole in the skin; and
- b) breaking at least one tissue connection in the belly fat by moving the separating means within relative to the carcass between the stomach and the belly skin in a plane which extends substantially horizontal plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis;
- c) removing the separating means from the carcass; and
- d) inserting an eviscerating means into the carcass after removing the separating means.

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59. (Cancelled).

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein the separating means is rotated within the carcass.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein the separating means is moved in a scraping manner between the stomach of the bird and belly fat situated on the inside of the belly skin.

62. (Currently Amended) A device for processing a slaughtered bird carcass, wherein the carcass comprises a spine, a suspended by its legs prior to evisceration of the bird comprising separating means configured to break tissue connections between the stomach, of the bird skin comprising belly skin, and belly fat, wherein the spine defines a longitudinal axis, situated on the inside of the device comprising separating means adapted to enter the carcass through a hole in the skin when the carcass is suspended by its legs and to move relative to the carcass between the belly skin[,] and the stomach in a plane which extends substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, wherein the separating means is not adapted to remove in a substantially horizontal plane viscera from the carcass.

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63. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 62, further comprising first moving means for moving the separating means in the carcass through a hole in the skin.

64. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 63, wherein the first moving means move the separating means in a rotating manner.

65. (Original) The device of claim 62, wherein the separating means are in the form of scraping means.

66. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 63, further comprising second moving means for placing a protection element in the carcass prior to or during moving the separating means in the carcass.

67. (Currently Amended) A method for breaking at least one tissue connection ~~in between the belly skin and the viscera~~ fat of a slaughtered bird prior to insertion of an eviscerating ~~gen of the carcass of means into the bird, the method~~ comprising inserting a substantially elongated element with a free end under the skin of the belly of the ~~slaughtered bird which is provided with~~ through a hole in the skin, wherein inserting the elongated element comprises:

inserting a protection element through the hole in the skin and into the bird to protect the viscera as the free end of the elongated element is moved within the carcass of the bird,

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wherein the protection element comprises a stop face adapted for pushing away the viscera away from the hole;

positioning the free end of the elongated element in the hole near the stop face; and

rotating the elongated element about a substantially vertical axis to insert the free end of the elongated element under the skin and to move the free end of the elongated element away from the stop face, the free end thereby breaking the at least one tissue connection in the belly fat.

68. (Currently Amended) A device for breaking at least one tissue connection in between the belly fat ~~skin and the viscera~~ of a slaughtered bird prior to evisceration of the ~~carcass of the bird~~ comprising:

a substantially elongated element having a free end for insertion under the skin of the belly of the bird;

a protection element for insertion into the bird through a hole in the skin to protect the viscera as the free end of the elongated element is moved within the carcass of the bird, wherein the protection element comprises a stop face adapted for pushing away the viscera away from the hole; and

moving means for positioning the free end of the elongated element in the hole near the stop face and for rotating the elongated element about a substantially vertical axis for inserting the free end of the elongated element under the skin and for moving the free end of

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the elongated element away from the stop face to thereby break the at least one tissue connection in the belly fat.

69. (Original) The device of claim 68, wherein the protection element is plate-shaped.

70. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein the hole in the skin is an opening obtained by cutting out the vent.

71. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 63, wherein the hole in the skin is an opening obtained by cutting out the vent.

72. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 68, wherein the hole in the skin is an opening obtained by cutting out the vent.

Claims 73 and 74 (Cancelled).

75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67, wherein the hole in the skin is an opening obtained by cutting out the vent.

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76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein the separating means is positioned at a selected position relative to the breastbone of the bird.

77. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 62, wherein the separating means is configured to be positioned at a selected position relative to the breastbone of the bird.

78. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the separating means is positioned to move in the plane at a predetermined location in the belly fat.

79. (New) The device of claim 62, wherein the separating means is configured to be positioned to move in the plane at a predetermined location in the belly fat.